



31^{ème} réunion du Comité permanent

Bonn, 28-29 septembre 2006

CMS/StC31/14

MISE AU POINT D'UN PARTENARIAT WSSD DE TYPE II POUR LA CONSERVATION DES OISEAUX D'EAU MIGRATEURS ET L'UTILISATION DURABLE DE LEURS HABITATS LE LONG DE L'ITINERAIRE AERIEN ASIE ORIENTALE-AUSTRALASIE

1. Le 17 août 2006, le gouvernement australien a écrit au Secrétaire exécutif de la CMS, voir pièce jointe, invitant la Convention à appuyer le Partenariat WSSD de type II proposé pour la conservation des oiseaux d'eau migrateurs et l'utilisation durable de leurs habitats le long de la voie de migration Asie orientale-Australasie. A cette lettre étaient joints un projet de document sur le Partenariat et un document historique.
2. Le Secrétariat de la CMS a participé à quelques-unes des négociations pour réaliser le Partenariat en 2004 et avant cela. Cependant, il lui manque un mandat récent pour exprimer une position au nom de la Convention sur ce projet important qui couvre une des principales voies de migration du monde. Considérant que des renseignements sur des développements récents n'étaient pas à la disposition des réunions du Conseil scientifique de la CMS et de la Conférence des Parties en novembre 2005, le Secrétariat estime que la position de la Convention devrait donc être déterminée par le Comité permanent.
3. Le Secrétariat a débattu récemment bilatéralement des propositions avec le gouvernement australien et dans le cadre du Groupe de liaison sur la biodiversité. Nous comprenons que les partenaires clés tiendront une réunion en Indonésie au cours de la première semaine de novembre pour établir le Partenariat.
4. Ces propositions marquent un nouveau développement dans les Accords sur les voies de migration et le Secrétariat estime qu'il serait nécessaire que le Comité permanent les examine soigneusement du point de vue des besoins régionaux en matière de conservation et du précédent pour d'autres voies de migration non encore couvertes par des Accords au titre de l'Article IV. Le Secrétariat fera connaître son propre point de vue au sujet des propositions à la réunion du Comité permanent et invite le Comité à donner des directives sur la position à prendre par la Convention.



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

Mr Robert Hepworth
Executive Secretary
CMS Secretariat
Martin Luther King Str. 8
D-53175 Bonn
Germany

Dear Mr Hepworth

**Re: Development of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Type II
Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and the Sustainable Use of
their Habitats in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.**

I am writing to provide you with the draft East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership Document for consideration, and to encourage you to become involved in this important initiative for future international cooperation for the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway.

At the first meeting to discuss the Partnership, in the Republic of Korea in November 2004, an international working group was created and tasked with developing the Partnership documents. Australia has been providing the Secretariat for the working group. The working group has met twice since its establishment, with a key result of the meetings being the agreement of a draft Partnership Document, which is provided for your consideration (Attachment 1) ahead of the Partnership launch later this year. A report of both meetings of the working group is also provided for your information (Attachment 2).

A Partnership strategic plan has also been discussed at the working group meetings, and a draft, which is currently being finalized, will be made available for your consideration in the coming weeks.

Attached to this letter is a background document which provides information on the Partnership. It highlights some of the changes proposed under the new Partnership and points out the benefits of a Partnership approach as the future framework for international cooperation for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and the sustainable use of their habitats. (Attachment 3)

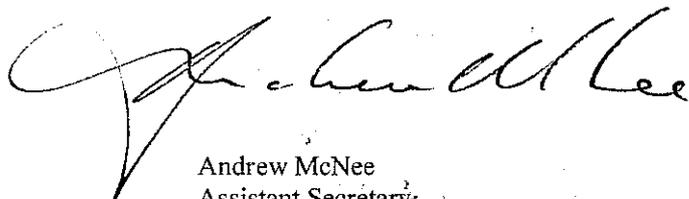
Since 1996, the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy (APMWCS) and its three Action Plans for Crane, Anatidae and Shorebirds have guided international cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. Upon launch of the Partnership, the APMWCS will be dissolved and those sites currently included in the Crane, Anatidae and Shorebird network sites that have received support of their National Government will transition to the new East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership Site Network.

The next meeting, and official launch of the Partnership, is planned for November 2006 in Indonesia. Once we have secured the place and dates for the meeting I will arrange for an official invitation to be sent. In the meantime, I encourage you to consider this important

initiative and to indicate your intention to endorse the Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

I look forward to receiving your response and I hope to have the pleasure of working with you under the Partnership to further the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew McNee', written in a cursive style.

Andrew McNee
Assistant Secretary
Marine Environment Branch
Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage

17 August 2006

Cc: Mr Doug Hykle

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

**Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds
and the Sustainable Use of their Habitats in the East Asian – Australasian
Flyway**

(Short Title “Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway”)

Introduction

The geographical routes that migratory waterbirds traverse on an annual basis are known as ‘flyways’¹. There are eight major flyways around the world. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway (the Flyway) stretches from the Russian Far East and Alaska, southwards through East Asia and South-east Asia, to Australia and New Zealand and encompasses 22 countries. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway is home to over 50 million migratory waterbirds from over 250 different populations, including 28 globally threatened species. During migration, waterbirds rely on a chain of highly productive wetlands to rest and feed, building up sufficient energy to fuel the next phase of their journey. International cooperation across their migratory range is therefore essential to conserve and protect migratory waterbirds and the habitats on which they depend.

In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, the Governments of Japan and Australia, together with Wetlands International, successfully proposed a Type II Partnership for the conservation and sustainable use of sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds in East Asia, South East Asia and Australasia. The Partnership was included in the list of WSSD Type II initiatives.

In November 2004, representatives from twenty-one Governments, Inter-Governmental organizations and non-government organizations met in the Republic of Korea to discuss future regional cooperation for conservation of migratory waterbirds using the Type II Partnership model. They agreed that this Partnership would enhance collaboration between Governments, Inter-governmental organizations and non-government organizations and contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Partnership builds on the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee, the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy (APMWCS), and its Action Plans for Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds. The Strategy and Action Plans have enhanced and guided international cooperation and coordination and activities to conserve and protect internationally important habitat for migratory waterbirds since 1996.

Achievements under the Strategy and Actions Plans have included the identification of more than 700 sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds in the Flyway and the development of Site Networks for Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds, as well as a range of activities that have increased our knowledge of migratory waterbirds, raised awareness of the importance of these birds and built capacity for managers responsible for maintaining sites important for migratory waterbirds across the Flyway.

¹ See definitions in Appendix II

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

Despite these efforts, waterbirds and their coastal and inland habitats are under increasing pressure from rapid population growth and economic development, particularly in East and South East Asia. These pressures impact on the waterbirds that spend the non-breeding season in these countries as well as those waterbirds that utilize the central parts of the Flyway during migration. This Partnership recognises the importance of economic development for communities that share important sites with migratory waterbirds, whilst ensuring the availability and quality of habitats required to maintain populations of migratory waterbirds.

The Partnership recognises that building and promoting the site network for migratory waterbirds, and delivering capacity building at a local level to ensure sustainable delivery of ecosystem services, will enhance the conservation status of the migratory waterbird groups covered by the Partnership in Appendix III of this document. The partnership also recognises that a flyway wide approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds is the most effective way to enhance their conservation status.

The Partnership will contribute to the implementation of a number of Inter-Governmental agreements and other international frameworks, including the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity (resolutions 7.4 and 7.28), the UNDP and UNEP Project Priorities and Guidelines, the UNEP Water Policy and the Portfolio of Water Actions compiled at 3rd World Water Forum. Endorsement of the Partnership as a regional initiative within the framework of the Ramsar Convention as stated in Resolution 9.7 is a significant recognition of the importance of this Partnership in the Flyway.

The Partnership will also assist those countries that currently have bilateral agreements for migratory birds in the Flyway (People's Republic of China, Japan, United States of America, Australia, Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea) to meet their obligations under their respective agreements.

The Partners of this Flyway Partnership have mutually consented as follows:

PARAGRAPH 1 – Legal Status

The Partnership is an informal and voluntary initiative of the Partners.

PARAGRAPH 2 – Purpose, Goal and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this Partnership is to provide a flyway wide framework to promote dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between a range of stakeholders including all levels of governments, site managers, multilateral environment agreements, technical institutions, UN agencies, development agencies, industrial and private sector, academe, non-government organisations, community groups and local people to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

Goal

Migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway are recognised and conserved for the benefit of people and biodiversity.

Objectives

1. Develop the Flyway Network of sites of international importance for the conservation of migratory waterbirds, building on the achievements of the APMWCS networks.
2. Enhance communication, education and public awareness of the values of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
3. Enhance flyway research and monitoring activities, build knowledge and promote exchange of information on waterbirds and their habitats.
4. Build the habitat and waterbird management capacity of natural resource managers, decision makers and local stakeholders.
5. Develop, especially for priority species and habitats, flyway wide approaches to enhance the conservation status of migratory waterbirds.

PARAGRAPH 3 – Development of the Network of sites of international importance for the conservation of migratory waterbirds along the East Asian- Australasian Flyway, building on the achievements of the APMWCS networks.

1. Establishment of an East Asian - Australasian Flyway Waterbird Site Network (Flyway Site Network) is a critical element of the Partnership and will ensure that a chain of internationally important sites are sustainably managed to support the long-term survival of migratory waterbirds within the flyway.
2. The Anatidae, Crane and Shorebird Network sites under the APMWCS will be invited to become part of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Site Network without further validation according to transitional guidelines.
4. The Site Network will indicate which species or group(s) of waterbirds (for example, Anatidae, Cranes, Shorebirds, Herons, Terns) for which a site is internationally important. Shared species between flyway network sites provide a sound basis for collaborative activities of the Partnership.
5. Government Partners are encouraged to submit internationally important migratory waterbird sites that occur in the territory they control for listing in the Flyway Site Network in Appendix V. Provided the criteria for inclusion in Appendix IV are satisfied, the Partners will note the submission and the site will be included in Appendix V according to the guidelines for sites to join the Flyway Site Network.
6. Government Partners may remove a site from the Flyway Site Network by informing the Secretariat in writing.

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

7. Government Partners should assist network site managers in their country to develop and implement site management plans according to relevant internationally agreed guidelines (eg Ramsar guidelines on wetland management).

PARAGRAPH 4 – Enhance communication, education and public awareness of the values of migratory waterbirds and their habitats

1. The Partners shall encourage communication, education and public awareness activities across the Flyway on migratory waterbirds, conservation and sustainable use of migratory waterbird sites.
2. The Partners are encouraged to raise awareness of migratory waterbirds and the importance of conserving them, with the aim of increasing engagement of communities and decision makers in activities to conserve and protect migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
3. A key message in the education and awareness materials will be the concept of the flyway wide approach to migratory waterbird conservation and a flyway site network of habitats, across the flyway that waterbirds need to complete their annual cycle.

PARAGRAPH 5 – Enhance flyway research and monitoring activities, build knowledge and promote exchange of information on waterbirds and their habitats.

1. The Partners are encouraged to develop and implement flyway wide collaborative research and monitoring programs relevant to shared populations of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
2. The Partners recognise the need for a better understanding of the migration strategies of migratory waterbirds to assist in avian disease risk assessment and development of response plans.
3. The Partners are encouraged to share information and data from research and monitoring programs in the flyway.

PARAGRAPH 6 – Build the habitat and waterbird management capacity of natural resource managers, decision makers and local stakeholders.

1. The Partners are encouraged to cooperate to build expertise across the Flyway Site Network including promoting sustainable development management techniques, developing and implementing management plans, monitoring of waterbirds, promoting awareness and public education, and research formulation.
2. The Partners are encouraged to assist communities to adopt and implement sustainable development principles in the management of sites of international importance, with particular attention in those countries in the flyway that have limited capacity and resources.

PARAGRAPH 7 – Develop, especially for priority species and habitats, flyway wide approaches to enhance the conservation status of migratory waterbirds.

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

1. For priority species (globally threatened migratory waterbirds, regionally threatened populations, species of conservation concern, and flagship species) and habitats within the Flyway, Partners are encouraged to promote and support the development of conservation and species management programs.

PARAGRAPH 8 – Membership

1. Governments may join this Partnership by endorsing the text and supporting the objectives and actions under this Partnership.
2. International Non-Government Organisations, Inter-Governmental organisations and the international business sector may join this Partnership by endorsing the text and supporting the objectives and actions under this Partnership.
3. This Partnership is open to new Partners.
4. The Partners should encourage additional membership of the Partnership.
5. Partners will be advised of application for membership out of session. If no issues are raised within one month, the applicant will be added to the list of Partners. If issues exist with the application, it will be referred to the next meeting of the partners for consideration.
6. The Partners should recognise the role of different levels of Governments in the implementation of the Partnership and encourage National and site level partnerships to support activities.
7. Partners may withdraw from this Partnership by giving three months notice in writing to the Secretariat.
8. An up to date list of Partners will be maintained in Appendix 1.

PARAGRAPH 9 – Administration

1. Initially, to oversee implementation of the Partnership, a meeting of the Partners will be held annually or as needed at mutually convenient locations.
2. The Partners shall elect a chair and vice chair for a term of 2 years.
3. The Partners shall establish a Secretariat to facilitate the effective communication and coordination of the Partnership and to coordinate activities across the Flyway. The Partners are encouraged to support and provide resources to the Secretariat.
4. The Partners shall consider the nature of the Secretariat and develop and adopt Terms of Reference.
5. The Partners may engage the services of a Partner or organisation to provide services to the Secretariat
6. Partners may amend the text of this Partnership document by consensus at meetings of the Partners

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

7. Partners may amend the migratory waterbird taxonomic groups listed in this Partnership by consensus including adding to, or removing migratory waterbird groups from, Appendix III.
8. The Partners may establish a Management Committee to facilitate the effective operation of the Partnership.
9. The Partners may establish advisory groups and permanent and/or ad hoc working groups/task forces as needed. The potential organisational structure of the Partnership is represented in Appendix VI.

PARAGRAPH 10 – Finance

1. The Partners are encouraged to provide resources to support activities of the Partnership.
2. Meetings of Partners will assess the extent of the need and options for generating financial resources for:
 - a) assisting Partners to carry out activities under this Partnership; and
 - b) the expenses required for the operation of the Secretariat, advisory groups, working groups/task forces and other groups established under this Partnership.

Appendix I

List of Partners

Endorsed by (Government/Inter-Governmental/Non-government Partner)	At (Place) or By (Method)	On (Date)

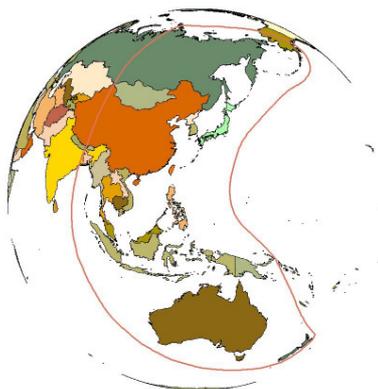
Appendix II – Definitions

For the purposes of the Partnership:

1. ‘Migratory waterbird’ means the East Asian – Australasian Flyway population of any species or lower taxon of waterbirds of the taxonomic groups identified in Appendix II, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries.

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

2. 'East Asian – Australasian Flyway' means one of the global waterbird migration systems that directly link sites and ecosystems in different countries and continents. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway includes parts of the countries of United States of America (Alaska) and the Russian Federation (Russian Far East) and the regions of East Asia, South-East Asia and Australasia.



Map of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway

3. 'Flyway' means the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.
4. 'Government Partner' means National Governments which have endorsed the Partnership. Countries within the Flyway are; Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Peoples Republic of China, Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Republic of Korea, The Russian Federation, Republic of Singapore, Democratic Republic of East Timor, Kingdom of Thailand, United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
5. 'Inter-Governmental Partner' means international and regional organisations, bodies and agencies which have endorsed the Partnership.
6. 'International Non-Government Partner' means international non-government organisations, national non-government organisations that coordinate waterbird conservation activities in more than one country in the Flyway and international business sector, which have endorsed the Partnership.
7. 'The Flyway Partners' refers collectively to the Government Partners, Inter-Governmental Partners, and International Non-government Partners within the Flyway.
8. 'Flyway Site Network' means the interconnectedness of migratory waterbird sites through shared species and populations throughout the Flyway.

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

Appendix III– Taxonomic groups of migratory waterbirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Taxonomic Group	English Name
Gaviidae	Divers/Loons
Podicipedidae	Grebes
Phalacrocoracidae	Cormorants
Pelecanidae	Pelicans
Ardeidae	Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns
Ciconiidae	Storks
Threskiornithidae	Ibises and Spoonbills
Anatidae	Swans, Geese and Ducks
Gruidae	Cranes
Rallidae	Rails, Gallinules and Coots
Heliornithidae	Finfoots
Jacaniidae	Jacanas
Haematopodidae	Oystercatcher
Recurvirostridae	Stilts and Avocet
Glareolidae	Pratincoles
Charadriidae	Plovers
Scolopacidae	Sandpipers
Laridae	Gulls, Terns and Skimmers

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

Appendix IV – Flyway Site Network Criteria

To be considered for inclusion in the Flyway Site Network, this Partnership adopts the following criteria:

- a. Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) criteria for internationally important sites for migratory waterbirds. That is:
 - Criterion 2: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.
 - Criterion 5: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.
 - Criterion 6: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.
- b. The staging criteria as applied under the Asia- Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy. That is:
 - i. A migration staging site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 0.25% individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.
 - ii. A staging site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 5,000 or more waterbirds during the migration period.
- c. Under exceptional circumstances a site can be nominated if it supports migratory waterbirds at a level or stage of their life cycle important to the maintenance of flyway populations. Justification of such nominations will be considered by the partnership on a case by case basis.

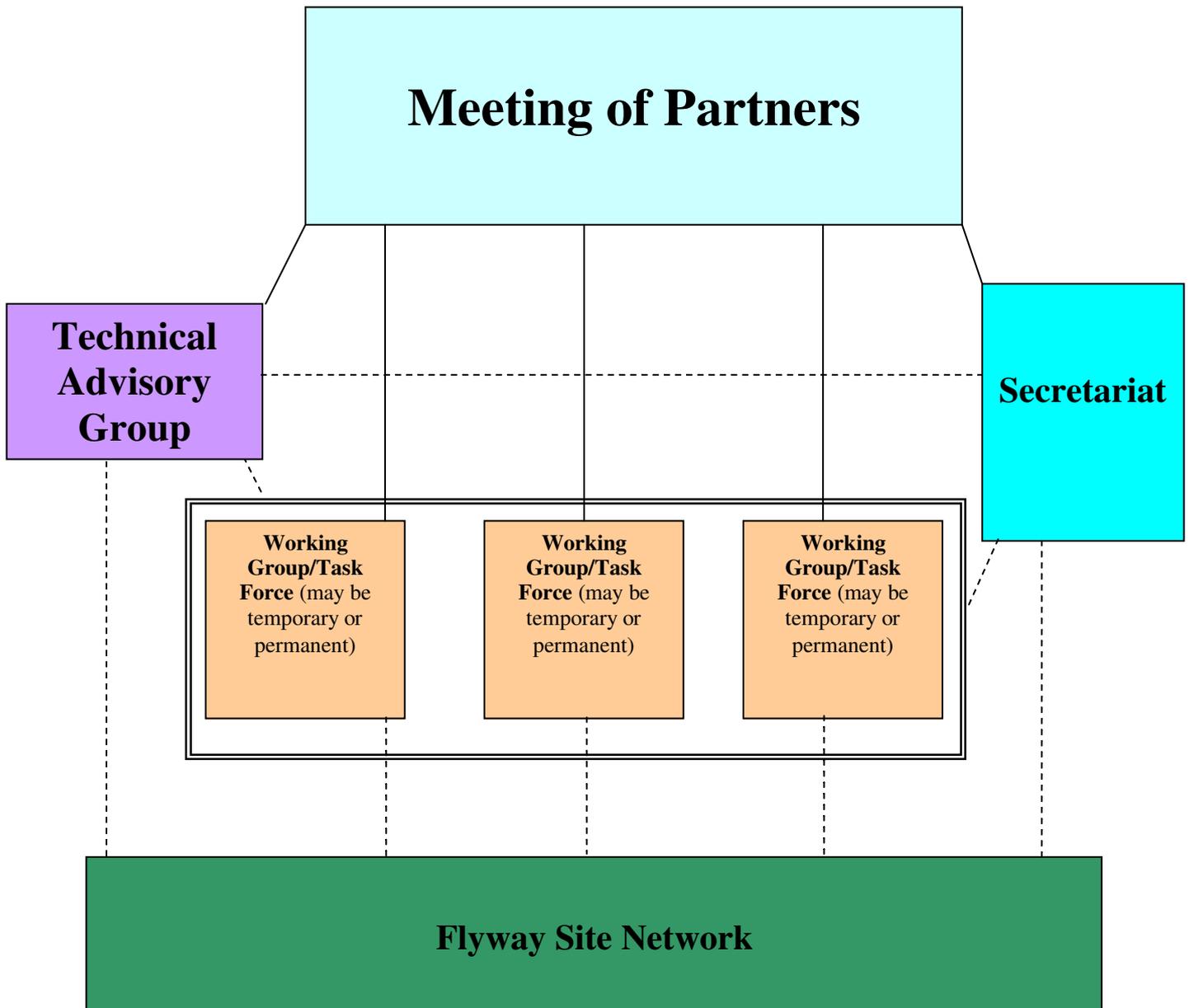
Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

Appendix V – Sites included in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network

Country	Migratory Waterbird Site included in Flyway Site Network	Migratory waterbird species or species groups for which the site is internationally important

Attachment 1
Draft Partnership Document
Revision based on discussions at the 2nd Working Group Meeting
held in Canberra, Australia, 21-23 March 2006

Appendix VI – Potential Organisational Structure of the Partnership



Report of the 1st Migratory Waterbird Partnership Working Group Meeting
Krabi, Thailand 15 & 16 December 2005

The Migratory Waterbird Partnership Working Group, which was established in Seosan City, Republic of Korea in November 2005 to develop the Partnership documents, held its first face to face meeting in Krabi, Thailand on 15 and 16 December 2005. Representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, USA, Thailand, Wetlands International, WWF Japan, Birdlife International, the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand and the Chairs of the three existing Working Groups for Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds under the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, attended the meeting.

The meeting, co-Chaired by Australia and Japan, used three small breakout groups to discuss and explore options for developing the Partnership documents. These breakout groups were facilitated by Ward Hagermeijer (Wetlands International), Guanchun Lei (Ramsar Secretariat) and Lew Young (Chair of the Shorebird Working Group). This format was very successful and allowed for a high level of engagement by all participants.

Australia, as the interim Secretariat to the working group, provided a brief report of its activities over the previous year to support the group, and offered to continue providing the interim Secretariat until such time as the Partnership is launched.

The interim Secretariat presented an outline of the draft Partnership text as it currently stood. An open discussion was then conducted to identify issues or concerns with the text. Participants felt that the draft would benefit from further broad discussion on each paragraph rather than focusing on issues of concern. The meeting then divided into the 3 smaller groups to discuss the draft text. The facilitators reported back to the meeting on outcomes of their group's discussion.

Australia and Wetlands International collated all comments on the first discussion of the draft and prepared a paper that identified issues and posed questions/options for further discussion. Over the course of the meeting, the draft was discussed twice more. A revised version, and/or drafting instructions for those paragraphs where time did not allow for detailed revision, was prepared. The interim Secretariat offered to prepare a revised draft Partnership Text and distribute it to the broader group of potential partners along with a report of the working group meeting. The revised draft is annexed to this report.

The USA gave an overview of the organisational model of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and how it operates. Australia then presented a potential organisational model for the Partnership. Australia emphasised that the model was developed to stimulate discussion and did not necessarily represent their preferred model. The meeting then divided into groups to consider the model and identify alternatives. Again, the facilitators reported back on the outcomes of the discussions.

Two of the groups proposed similar models based on the one presented by Australia, while one group's model was similar to the organisational model that exists under the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy (APMCS). One consistency

Attachment 2

throughout the 3 groups was the desire to have a full time Secretariat or administrative body that supports and coordinates a range of activities (communication, funding, logistical) under the Partnership. The interim Secretariat offered to develop a draft organisational model based on the discussions and distribute this to the working group for feedback.

The original agenda for the meeting included discussion of a five year action plan and implementation arrangements, however these two agenda items were not discussed in length at the meeting. There was brief discussion on the documents which would set the operation of the partnership. Participants agreed that rather than a 5 year action plan, a structure based on a broad Strategic Plan and annual Work Plans would be more suitable for the Partnership. Participants felt it was important to focus on developing the Partnership Text and identifying and refining the objectives. They felt that this would then lead more readily into development of the Partnership Strategic Plan document and implementation arrangements. Participants agreed that these items should be discussed further at the second meeting of the working group planned for early 2006 in Canberra, Australia.

The Working Group agreed to recommend to the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee, an extension of the APMWCS and its associated Action Plans until such time as the Partnership is launched in late 2006.

Attachment 2

Report of the 2nd Migratory Waterbird Partnership Working Group Meeting Canberra, Australia 21 – 23 March 2006

The Migratory Waterbird Partnership Working Group held its second meeting in Canberra, Australia from 21 – 23 March 2006. Representatives from Australia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, USA, Wetlands International, Ramsar Secretariat, WWF Japan, WWF Australia, Birdlife Asia, Birds Australia, the Chairs of the three existing Working Groups for Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds under the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy and the 3 existing Flyway support officers attended the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Australia. A list of attendees is at Attachment A.

Australia, as the interim Secretariat, presented the changes to the draft Partnership text that had been made according to the drafting instructions from the 1st meeting of the Working Group. The draft text was then discussed by the group as a whole, with particular attention paid to the areas drafted since the 1st meeting. A number of decision points remaining from the 1st meeting were resolved, most notably that the Partnership would have a Secretariat. The Working Group also agreed on the inclusion of additional text, further recognising the achievements of the existing Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee, its Strategy and Action Plans, and the three existing site networks.

Where issues arose which could not be resolved quickly, or where redrafting was required, small taskforces were formed to work on each issue. One of the main issues that arose related to the incorporation of sites in the current three networks into the single Partnership Flyway Network. The meeting agreed that all existing sites should be encouraged to join the Partnership Flyway Network, but recognised that some consideration was needed on how best to undertake the transition. A taskforce, consisting of Carlo Custodio, Noriko Moriwake and Taej Mundkur, produced draft transitional guidelines to address this issue; this document is attached to this report for your consideration (Attachment B).

The Partnership text was further revised based on the comments raised in the group discussion and the work of the taskforces. On the final day of the meeting, the Working Group agreed upon a final version of the Partnership text, although noting that some minor amendment would be required to accommodate issues raised late in the meeting. A copy of the agreed final text is Attachment C.

On the morning of the second day of the meeting, Wetlands International presented the draft Implementation Strategy. The meeting focussed initially on the Strategic Outcomes, which are derived from the Objectives of the Partnership, and describe the outcomes the Partnership needs to achieve in order to meet its Objectives. The meeting divided into two groups, facilitated by Doug Watkins and Jason Ferris, to work through the Strategic Outcomes under each Objective. The facilitators reported back to the meeting on the amendments to the strategic outcomes proposed by their groups.

The suggestions of the two groups were collated into a new document in time for the afternoon session, which used breakout groups to discuss the remaining part of the

Attachment 2

draft Implementation Strategy: the expected results under each Strategic Outcome; and the guiding principles and priority setting for each Strategic Outcome.

The meeting divided into four breakout groups, facilitated by Mark Barter (representing the Chair of the Shorebird Working Group), Lei Guangchun (Ramsar Convention Secretariat), Noritaka Ichida (Birdlife Asia) and Bianca Priest (WWF Australia), with each group designated two of the Objectives of the Partnership on which to work (either 1 and 4; or 3 and 5. Bianca Priest, Warren Lee-Long and Carlo Custodio formed a taskforce to work on Objective 2 overnight).

As at the 1st meeting of the Working Group, the use of breakout groups was successful. The small group environment provided an excellent opportunity for Working Group members to explore the entire implementation process: identifying strategic outcomes (from the Objectives of the Partnership), and then identifying expected results, and guiding principles and priority setting for project development (based on the strategic outcomes).

The facilitators reported back briefly to the meeting but, given the complex nature of the draft Implementation Strategy, it was recognised that there was insufficient time to seek agreement on the document. Wetlands International collated the comments from the breakout groups and will circulate a revised draft document to the Working Group for further discussion and comment in the lead-up to the Partnership launch.

The Working Group briefly discussed the launch of the Partnership, agreeing to work towards a launch before the end of this year, with October and November identified as potential months for the launch. Australia conveyed Indonesia's invitation to host the next MWCC meeting. This would be a logical prelude to the launch of the Partnership; Australia will ask Indonesia whether it is prepared to host both the MWCC meeting and the Partnership launch back-to-back.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair thanked the attendees for their participation and their valuable contribution to the development of the Partnership documents. The Chair thanked the Governments of Australia and Japan for their financial support of the meeting, and the Wild Bird Society of Japan for their assistance with logistical arrangements. The Chair also recognised the work of the interim Secretariat and Wetlands International in preparing for and hosting the Working Group meeting.

Attachment 3

Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and the Sustainable Use of their Habitats in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway

**Partnership Interim Secretariat
July 2006**

Background

The Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy has been the framework for international cooperation for conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region since 1996. The Strategy has been successful in raising the awareness of the importance of conserving migratory waterbirds. Some of the major achievements include:

- The development of action plans for three species groups, Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds and globally threatened species.
- Development of the networks of sites for Anatidae; cranes and shorebirds in the Flyway (86 sites in 13 countries) and the range of activities undertaken at network sites
- Raised awareness of waterbirds and their link to wetland values and functions throughout the region, through a range of activities
- Increased capacity of national/local government agencies and NGOs to implement conservation actions for migratory waterbirds.

In November 2004, 22 representatives from thirteen countries, non-government organizations and inter-governmental organizations met in the Republic of Korea to discuss future arrangements for the conservation and sustainable use of sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds, using a Type II Partnership model endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002.

At the meeting participants recognized that a WSSD Type II Partnership would enhance collaboration between Governments, Inter-Governmental organizations and non-Government organizations and contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

The meeting supported further development of the proposal and agreed to establish a working group to develop a Partnership document and 5 year strategic plan of action for consideration at a 2nd meeting of the Partnership. Australia has been providing the Secretariat for the Working Group.

The working group has met twice since being established in November 2004. The first meeting was held in Krabi, Thailand on 15 and 16 December 2005 and the second meeting was held in Canberra, Australia from 21 to 23 March 2006. A key result of these working group meetings has been the development of an agreed draft Partnership Document.

What are the changes and why?

The Partnership acknowledges the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy and aims to build on them by strengthening cooperation and linking outcomes to the principles of sustainable development. The Partnership recognizes that building and promoting the site network for migratory waterbirds, and delivering capacity

Attachment 3

building at a local level, will enhance the conservation status of the migratory waterbirds covered by the Partnership.

Whilst the Strategy has been successful, it has been faced with a number of challenges. The Strategy has been an informal and voluntary arrangement that is linked to the broader global environment agenda through resolutions of the Ramsar and CMS. It has suffered from a lack of strong commitment by Governments. This has often resulted in funding for core activities being provided by a limited number of countries. By linking international cooperation to broader Government objectives of Sustainable Development through a WSSD Type II Partnership model the international mandate is strengthened and therefore funding to support core activities of the Partnership may be more secure. It would also enhance opportunities to leverage funding for additional activities through such mechanisms as the Global Environment Facility, UNDP, UNEP and corporate sponsorship.

Some of the key changes to address this and other challenges under the new Partnership are:

1. Redefining the geographic coverage to include only those countries of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. The Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy included 2 of the 8 global Flyways: the Central Asian Flyway and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Over the last two years the countries of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) have developed an action plan which may, in the future, be included under the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA); an international agreement under the Convention on Migratory Species. In recognition of the ecological separation of the two Flyways, and the progression toward more Flyway-specific international arrangements, the new Partnership will focus on only the 22 countries of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway; however communication links with the CAF, AEWA and the North American initiatives will be maintained.

2. Recognising the active roles of different Partners - The Flyway Partnership includes a mechanism for all Partners to indicate their support by endorsing the Partnership. In particular, this provides a mechanism to strengthen Government engagement through formal endorsement. Although the Partnership, like the Strategy, is an informal voluntary arrangement, this step is included to increase recognition of the commitment of Partners, particularly Government Partners, to activities under the Partnership. It also welcomes closer partnership and endorsement by the international non-government organizations and bodies, and inter-governmental bodies and the international corporate sector.

A query could be raised about the appropriateness of inter-governmental organizations becoming Partners, as these organizations already serve a number of Government Parties on specific issues. Paragraph 8 on Membership of the Partnership document sets out which organizations are eligible to become Partners and adopts a mechanism for existing Partners to raise concerns about the eligibility of new Partners. While the Partnership will require Partners to endorse the Partnership and commit to the objectives, there is no legal joining mechanism in this cooperative initiative. WSSD Type II Partnerships are not restrictive in the composition of membership, and the initiating Partners and the Partnership Working Group feel there is benefit in bringing the technical expertise and networking capacity that is available in such conventions as Ramsar and CMS to this Partnership.

3. Site Networks. The major success of the past decade of work has been the development of international networks of important sites for migratory Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds. These networks have provided a strong and successful framework for building capacity, education and awareness activities, linking of sites, management action and improving the knowledge of waterbird populations and conservation needs.

Despite these successes there are a number of ongoing challenges in developing the Site Networks. More than 600 internationally important sites for migratory waterbirds have been

Attachment 3

identified in the region. At present the networks include only 13% of these sites. Associated with the expansion of the network are the challenges of developing the capacity of governments, site staff and local communities to achieve wise-use around these important wetlands. It is also clear that we must develop additional mechanisms that will assist governments, communities and stakeholders to achieve integration between their economic and social needs with sustainable use of wetlands and waterbird populations.

Combining the three current site networks for Cranes, Anatidae and Shorebirds to a single flyway network for all species of migratory waterbirds will provide for internationally important habitat for other waterbird species to be recognized and included in the site network. Species that would benefit from this approach include threatened species such as black-faced spoonbill and dalmatian pelican, as well as the range of other waterbird groups including egrets, gulls and terns.

The move to a single Flyway site network for all migratory waterbird species under the Partnership will result in a more streamlined and integrated approach for many coordination and conservation activities. Activities such as communication, education, awareness raising, population monitoring and capacity building will benefit from this approach. The Partnership also recognizes that shared species between flyway network sites provide a sound basis for collaborative activities of the Partnership and supports the continuation of species group or species specific work.

4. Secretariat - The establishment of a permanent Secretariat will enhance international cooperation by providing core support to the Partnership through the provision of a central coordination point for the collection and dissemination of information relevant to the Partnership.

5. Encouraging national partnerships – One of the key concepts of the Partnership is encouraging the development of national partnerships to support the international framework and facilitate and guide implementation at the national level. How national partnerships would be established and how they would operate would be a matter for each Government Partner. Some countries may already have models in place, for example both Japan and Australia have or are developing national arrangements that support this concept. The development of national partnerships would also allow for collaborative activities for species specific work at the national level.

6. Further strengthening of links to existing agreements/conventions – The Partnership will forge strong links to existing bilateral and multilateral agreements and conventions. Several countries within the Flyway have bilateral treaties for the protection of migratory birds. The Partnership, although not directly linked to the bilateral agreements, will contribute to them through implementation of related conservation activities. Links with Conventions will also be strengthened under the Partnership. At the 9th Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention, the Partnership was endorsed as a Regional Initiative, as stated in Resolution 9.7. It is anticipated that the Ramsar Convention will participate in implementation as a Partner organization upon launch of the Partnership. We are hopeful that other inter-Governmental organizations such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) will also participate in implementation as Partner organizations.